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# Target gift card scammer caught with thousands of tampered cards

by Sophia Lesseos | Tue, December 12th 2023



Target gift card scammer caught with thousands of tampered cards (Photo: Sacramento County Sheriff's Office)

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SACRAMENTO, Calif. (KMPH) — The holidays are a busy time for shoppers and an even busier time for thieves.

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Sacramento County Sheriff's Office recently arrested Ningning Sun for a massive gift card scam.

This one involved more than 50 Target stores across the state.

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Detectives say Sun was found with 200 Target gift cards on him and more than 5000 gift cards in his car.

They say he was placing gift cards at a Target store inside his jacket and then replacing those gift cards with another set.

If someone had used them, the money could have gone to China within seconds.

"It just shows the ingenuity of criminals," said Cyber Fraud and Privacy Attorney Shawn Tuma.

He says this is a problem across the U.S.

“Steal the originals, take them, and then hope that someone gets those doctored cards, uses them to apply funds to, and then the money transfers out of that to bank accounts they have set up.

If you're looking to buy gift cards, look out for any signs of tampering, especially scuff marks or scratches near the bar code on the back of the card.

If you can, ask for cards that are behind the counter instead of grabbing them at a kiosk.

Sun was arrested during Operation "bad elf," where undercover officers were placed at Target stores and other retailers around Sacramento to catch retail thieves.

Sacramento County Sheriff's Office

about 2 months ago

GIFT CARD SCAM AND ARREST

During our recent retail theft Operation Bad Elf, detectives observed an individual, later identified as Ningning Sun, acting suspiciously near the gift cards in the payment aisles in a Sacramento Target store. Detectives observed him placing all the gift cards inside his jacket, then replacing the

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gift cards on the rack with another set of seemingly identical ones. After Sun was stopped trying to exit the store with the stolen gift cards, detectiv...  
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Sacramento County Sheriff Jim Cooper says crime is up because of current laws with little to no penalties or accountability.

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